(e) if so, whether any action plan for upgrading ports have been finalized?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (e) During an interactive session on the Port Sector between the Department of Shipping and port authorities in the Maritime State Governments and Union Territory Administrations held on 3rd July, 2006, a scenario where the Indian ports, both major and non-major, need to plan for building up an aggregate capacity of at least 2000 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by the year 2016-17 was visualized in the context of the rate at which the Indian economy is expected to grow in the near future. During the session, a number of Maritime State Governments expressed themselves in favour of a role for central financial assistance in the development of non-major ports. There was also general agreement that the road/rail connectivity to non-major ports needs to be upgraded. The non-major ports are, however, under the overall jurisdiction of the respective State Governments/Union Territory Administrations in whom the responsibility for their development and augmentation of capacities therein devolves.

Declaring Kakinada Canal as National Waterways

1747. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are seriously considering Kakinada-Pondicherry Canal along with rivers Godavari and Krishna to declare as National Waterways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any time-frame has been fixed by which this is going to be completed; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A proposal for declaring Kakinada-Pondicherry stretch of Canals consisting of Kakinada Canal, Eluru Canal, Commamur Canal, Buckingham Canal and Kaluveli tank along with Bhadrachalam-Rajahmundry stretch of River Godavari and Wazirabad-Vijayawada stretch of River Krishna as a National Waterway is under consideration. The total length of the proposed National Waterway

is 1095 kms. and the estimated cost of development works is Rs. 542 Crore.

(c) and (d) No specific timeframe can be given in this regard at this stage.

New routes on National Highways network in Andhra Pradesh

1748. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have added eight new routes, consisting of 1551 kms. in various parts of the country to National Highway network;

(b) if so, the details of routes/roads that have been identified in the State of Andhra Pradesh and the number of kms. that are going to be added to the National Highway network in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) the criteria adopted in identifying the eight new routes in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Recently eight new routes/roads have been declared as National Highways. No new National Highway in the State in Andhra Pradesh have been declared during this period. At present there is no proposal for declaration of National Highway in the country including Andhra Pradesh.

(c) One route has been declared as a National Highway as per the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court. Seven State roads meeting one or more criteria such as connecting important tourist and industrial centres, meeting strategic requirements, reducing travel distance and opening up of backward regions have been declared as National Highways in March and June, 2006.

Widening of NH No. 8

1749. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the approval of the project for widening the National Highway between Vadodara and Surat on NH No. 8 is still awaited from Government;